

PROFESSIONAL AGENCY IN THE CLASSROOM OF SELECTED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CASTILLEJOS DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The study generally aimed to describe the professional agency of junior high school teachers in Castillejos District, Division of Zambales, for the School Year 2022-2023. The study employed a descriptive survey type of research with the survey questionnaire as the research instrument, adapted from Hull and Uematsu (2020). The study utilized descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and ANOVA. Based on the findings, most of the teachers are 41-50 years old, female, with Masteral units, have 10 and below years of teaching experience, and are English teachers. Teachers have a high professional agency with regard to a collaborative environment and transformative practice, reflection in the classroom, and resources in the classroom. There is no significant difference in the professional agency of junior high school teachers when grouped according to age, gender, highest educational attainment, number of years in teaching, and field of specialization. The proposed action plan is aimed at promoting a collaborative, reflective, and innovative learning environment that enhances student learning outcomes and could help improve the quality of teaching and learning experiences for both students and teachers. The researcher recommended the following: Schools could provide more professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in using innovative teaching materials and techniques, encourage more opportunities for teachers to work together in designing and implementing lessons, allocate sufficient resources and budgetary requirements, and conduct a parallel or similar study with an in-depth and broader scope to validate the findings obtained in the study.

Keywords: Professional Agency, Collaborative Environment, Transformative Practice, Reflection, and Resources in the Classroom

INTRODUCTION

Professional agency refers to teachers' ability to act intentionally and constructively in guiding their own professional growth and contributing to the development of their colleagues. It influences classroom practices, supports principled decision-making, and shapes teachers' professional identity. Importantly, professional agency is not a fixed trait but a capacity that can be developed through training and experience.¹

Having agency is essential in professional development, as it empowers teachers to take responsibility for their learning rather than passively responding to opportunities. Teachers with strong agency model lifelong learning, act as leaders, and positively influence both colleagues and students. Agency enables teachers to make informed choices aligned with their goals and to support collaborative growth within their professional community.²

However, professional agency is shaped not only by teachers' skills, knowledge, and aspirations but also by contextual factors that may enable or constrain innovation. This highlights the limitation of viewing agency solely as "capacity building," as agency emerges from the interaction between individual capabilities and situational conditions.³

Professional agency is a fundamental component of teacher education and ongoing professional practice. It allows teachers to identify their learning needs, engage in innovation, and adapt meaningfully to professional demands over time rather than merely complying with external requirements. Agency also supports continuous professional development through collaboration, reflection, and transformative classroom practices.⁴

In the Philippine context, research on teachers' professional agency remains limited. Studying this area is crucial to understanding factors that influence teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, professional growth, and equitable educational opportunities. Such research can inform policies and practices that foster supportive environments, ultimately improving educational quality. Accordingly, the study focused on determining the professional agency of junior high school teachers in the Castillejos District, Division of Zambales.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The study generally aimed to determine the professional agency of junior high school teachers in Castillejos District, Division of Zambales, Philippines for the School Year 2022-2023.

OBJECTIVES

The study focuses on Junior High School Teachers in the Castillejos District, Zambales, aiming to:

- Identify factors influencing teacher empowerment.
- Inform policies that create more supportive work environments.
- Ultimately improve the overall quality of education through teacher-led innovation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Descriptive cross-sectional research was used in the study, with a survey questionnaire as the main research instrument. The study determined the significant difference in the professional agency of junior high school teachers when grouped according to profile variables. The perceptions and insights were solicited from the public junior high school teachers selected randomly in the Castillejos District, Schools Division Office of Zambales, Philippines for the School Year 2022-2023. Slovin's formula was used to calculate the number of respondents needed from each school with a margin of error of 5%.

Specification of the instrument and related measurement

Part I: Demographic Profile of Teachers (Age, Gender, Highest Educational Attainment, Number of Years in Teaching, and Field of Specialization)

Part II: Survey checklist adapted from Hull and Uematsu (2020). Instrument consists of the level of professional agency of teachers with regard to a collaborative environment and transformative practice, reflection in the classroom, and resources in the classroom. The teachers answered on a scale ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree), 3 (Agree), 2 (Moderately Agree), and 1 (Disagree).

RESULTS

Table I shows the profile of teachers in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, number of years in teaching, and field of specialization.

Table I: Profile of Junior High School Teachers

Profile of the Teachers		Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Age	51-60	23	16	3
	41-50	59	41	1
	31-40	44	31	2
	30 and below	18	13	4
Gender	Male	44	31	3
	Female	100	69	1
Highest Educational Attainment	Doctoral Graduate	1	1	5
	With Doctoral Units	6	4	4
	Masteral Graduate	19	13	2.5
	With Masteral Units	100	69	1
	College Graduate	18	13	2.5
Years in Teaching	31 and above	3	2	4
	21-30	20	14	3
	11-20	60	42	2
	10 and below	61	42	1
Field of Specialization	Filipino	19	13	5
	English	25	17	1
	Science	24	17	2
	Mathematics	21	15	4
	AP	23	16	3
	MAPEH	13	9	6
	EsP	8	6	8
	TLE	11	8	7
Total		144	100	

Table II shows the summary of the level of professional agency of teachers in terms of collaborative environment and transformative practice, reflection, and resources in the classroom.

Table II: Summary of the Professional Agency of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
1. Collaborative Environment and Transformative Practice	3.16	High	2
2. Reflection in the Classroom	3.61	Very High	1
3. Resources in the Classroom	3.08	High	3
Average Weighted Mean	3.28	High	

Table III shows the summary of ANOVA on the difference in the professional agency of junior high school teachers when grouped according to profile variables.

Table III: Summary of the Difference in the Professional Agency of Junior High School Teachers when grouped according to Profile

Teachers' Profile	Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	Interpretation
Age	Between Groups	0.1037	3	0.0346	0.3229	0.8088	2.669	Not Significant
	Within Groups	14.9841	140	0.1070				
	total	15.0878	143					
Gender	Between Groups	0.0013	1	0.0013	0.0123	0.9117	3.908	Not Significant
	Within Groups	15.0865	142	0.1062				
	total	15.0878	143					
Highest Educational Attainment	Between Groups	0.841	4	0.21	2.051	0.091	2.437	Not Significant
	Within Groups	14.25	139	0.102				
	total	15.09	143					
Number of Years in Teaching	Between Groups	0.3267	3	0.1089	1.0328	0.3801	2.669	Not Significant
	Within Groups	14.7611	140	0.1054				
	total	15.0878	143					
Field Specialization of	Between Groups	0.8	7	0.1	1	0.4	2.1	Not Significant
	Within Groups	14	136	0.1				
	total	15	143					

DISCUSSION

Most of the teachers were 41-50 years old, with the highest frequency of 59 out of 144, or 41%. The least number was those 30 and below, with 18 out of 144 or 13%.

The majority of the teachers were female, with the highest frequency of 100 out of 144 or 69%, while males were 44 out of 144 or 31%.

The majority of the teachers were with Masteral Units with the highest frequency of 100 out of 144 or 69%. The least number was those Doctoral Graduates, with only one out of 144, or 1%.

Most of the teachers have 10 years or less of teaching experience, with the highest frequency of 61 out of 144, or 42%. The least number was those 31 years and above, with 3 out of 144 or 2%.

Most of the teachers were English teachers, with the highest frequency of 25 out of 144, or 17%. The least number was those ESP teachers with 8 out of 144, or 6%.

Teachers have a very high professional agency in terms of reflection in the classroom, with the highest mean of 3.61. However, teachers have a high professional agency in terms of resources in the classroom, with the lowest mean of 3.08. In summary, teachers have a high professional agency with a mean of 3.28.

There was no significant difference in the professional agency of junior high school teachers when grouped according to age, gender, highest educational attainment, number of years in teaching, and field of specialization. Since the computed F-values are lesser than the critical F-value, it failed to reject the hypothesis. It shows that the professional agency of junior high school teachers does not vary on these variables.

CONCLUSION

Most of the teachers were 41-50 years old, female, with masteral units, had 10 and below years of teaching experience, and were English teachers. Teachers have a high professional agency with regard to a collaborative environment and transformative practice, reflection in the classroom, and resources in the classroom. There was no significant difference in the professional agency of junior high school teachers when grouped according to age, gender, highest educational attainment, number of years in teaching, and field of specialization. By focusing on the Key Result Areas (KRA) and objectives of collaborative environment and transformative practice, reflection in the classroom, and resources in the classroom, the action plan presented could help improve the quality of teaching and learning experiences for both students and teachers.

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